

SOFT TOYS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(a) Field of the Invention

This invention relates to soft toys, and in particular to soft toys having a generally humanoid or animal-like form, intended as playthings for children.

(b) Description of the Prior Art

One known method for making animal-like or human-like soft toys for children, which has been practised for many years, is to mould a foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex material over a relatively stiff but flexible wire frame or skeleton. The mould for the foamed latex material may take any desired form, but typically includes a torso portion, arm and leg portions and a head portion, the arm and leg portions respectively including hand and foot sections, or paw sections, as required. The completed toy is then generally soft to the touch, by virtue of the resilient characteristics of the foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex material, and yet may be deformed to take up a required attitude. The toy moreover tends to remain in such an attitude, by virtue of the wire skeleton. Soft toys manufactured by this process are usually finished by painting directly on the outer surface of the formed natural or synthetic rubber latex material and of course the toys may be dressed with clothing if required.

It is a disadvantage of the above known manufacturing method for soft toys that the production of appropriate moulds for the foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex material is a skilled, time consuming task, and is thus very expensive. If a manufacturer wishes to produce a range of animal- or human-like soft toys all generally similar but having different characteristics—for instance, soft toys of generally the same size and shape but having different facial characteristics such as the face of a human, the face of a rabbit, the face of a dog and so on—a separate mould is required for each toy in the range. Moreover, if it is desired slightly to change a design, often a completely new mould must be produced. A further disadvantage of the known method described above is that the painting on the foamed material to finish the toy has to be done by hand, and a labour-intensive process such as this is very expensive to perform in the climate of the modern toy-making industry.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is a principal object of this invention to produce a soft toy having a body of a foamed latex material, but which allows the production of a range of similar toys without all the attendant disadvantages of the known processes discussed above. In particular, it is an object of this invention to provide a soft toy which may be finished to have different facial characteristics without the need to produce a separate mould for each design.

A further object is to provide a soft toy which is relatively easy to manufacture and which does not require labour-intensive finishing, such as painting by hand. A soft toy of this invention is thus relatively cheap to manufacture, as compared to the known hand-painted foamed-latex designs.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide a soft toy which has safety advantages over the known designs of toys having a wire skeleton covered with foamed latex, insofar as in the toy of this invention, at the ends of the limbs of the toy, the wire skeleton is

prevented from penetrating the exterior skin of the foamed latex in the event of abuse of the toy.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the foregoing objects, this invention provides a soft toy comprising a body and a fabric covering, said body having a torso, four limb portions and a neck portion all of which portions and the torso consist of a foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex material moulded over a flexible wire skeleton, and said fabric covering being permanently fitted over said body and including hand and foot members at the respective ends of said limb portions and a shaped head member which fits over said neck portion, the hand, foot and head members each being stuffed with a stuffing material whereby the hand, foot and head members hold a desired, pre-formed shape dictated by the fabric covering.

It will be appreciated that with the toy of this invention, a single body consisting of foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex material moulded over a wire skeleton, may be used to produce a range of soft toys of essentially the same nature but of different characteristics so far as the head, foot and hand members are concerned. Thus, the head member may be cut and stitched from fabric to be a facsimile of a human head or different forms of animal head, or caricatures thereof, after the stitched fabric has been stuffed with an appropriate stuffing material. In a similar way, the fabric may be cut and stitched to form the hand and foot members, when stuffed with a stuffing material, to be of a desired shape appropriate for instance for the form of head being used, or indeed any other desired shape and form. For example, the 'hand' and 'foot' members may be in the form of similar paws.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A soft toy arranged in accordance with this invention is described hereinbelow, referring to the accompanying drawings, and is described only by way of example of this invention. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a diagram showing a wire skeleton for a soft toy of this invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a body for use in the soft toy; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a completed soft toy constructed in accordance with this invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Various preferred aspects of this invention will now be described, as well as said specific embodiment which incorporates many of the various preferred aspects.

The fabric covering for the body need not be made all of the one and same fabric. For instance, different fabrics may be cut and stitched together to provide "clothes" of different colours—for instance, "trousers" for the lower regions and leg (or hind leg) limb portions of the body and a "shirt" for the upper region and arm (or fore-leg) limb portions of the body.

The hand and foot members may be formed from the same fabric as the covering for the immediately adjacent limb portions, though it is preferred to provide the covering for said hand and foot members from a different fabric, either different in colour alone or possibly different in texture as well as colour and stitched to the fabric covering the adjacent limb portions. Similarly,